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Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 148963

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS UK

SUBJECT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON POLICE CONDUCT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON DESK OFFICER JUNE 12 TO DISCUSS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT AND MASON'S JUNE 8 STATEMENT IN COMMONS REGARDING IT. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO STRESS TO US THREE SPECIFIC POINTS:

(1) THE 78 COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED MISTREATMENT DESCRIBED IN AMNESTY'S REPORT ARE ALL PRESENTED ANONYMOUSLY, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR PUBLIC PROSECUTOR TO INVESTIGATE OR INITIATE LEGAL ACTION REGARDING THEM. IF INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED WILL IDENTIFY THEMSELVES, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND WILL PROMPTLY AND THOROUGHLY FOLLOW UP ON EACH ALLEGATION THROUGH ESTABLISHED LEGAL PROCEDURES
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(WHICH ALONE PROVIDE POLICEMEN CONCERNED THE LEGALSAFE-GUARDS TO WHICH ANY ACCUSED PERSON IS ENTITLED). DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS IS AN INDEPENDENT OFFICIAL WHOSE ACTIONS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO INFLUENCE BY EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY.

(2) ALTHOUGH LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS PREVENTED DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL CASES, BOTH BRITISH GOVERNMENT (UNLIKE THE IRISH

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GOVERNMENT) AND THE RUC HAD OFFERED FULLEST POSSIBLE COOP-
ERATION TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, EXPLAINING IN DETAIL THE
PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES (INCLUDING INTERNAL RUC PROCE-
DURES) FOR HANDLING PERSONS IN CUSTODY.

(3) THE UK HAS ACCEPTED THE SUBSTANCE OF AMNESTY'S PRO-
POSAL THAT THERE BE AN IMPARTIAL INQUIRY REGARDING POLI-
CIES AND PROCEDURES UNDER DIRECTION OF A RETIRED JUDGE OR
A SENIOR LAWYER WITH JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE. THE INQUIRY
WILL HAVE A MORE NARROW SCOPE THAN AMNESTY SUGGESTS, SINCE
SPECIFIC CASES ARE BEST DEALT WITH THROUGH THE PRESCRIBED
LEGAL CHANNELS. HOWEVER, THE INQUIRY WILL COVER POLICE
PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES IN NORTHERN IRELAND RELATING TO
INTERROGATION AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROCEDURES DEALING
WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE. THE INQUIRY WILL BE
CONDUCTED IN PRIVATE BUT ITS REPORT WILL BE PUBLISHED.

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